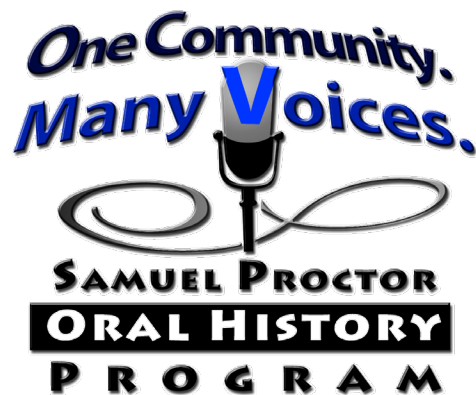


Henry Leroy Blue

**Southeastern Indian Oral History Project (SIOHP)
CAT-160**

Interview by:

**Emma Reid Echols
April 6, 1983**



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54 minutes | 22 pages

Abstract: Leroy Blue recounts tells a series of stories about growing up as the son of Gilbert Blue, a Catawba Chief. He chronicles his early education, his marriage, and various jobs he worked. He then discusses injustices toward the Catawba people regarding the selling of land after the settlement and his hope for a better future. Emma Echols also interrupts the recording to read “The Story of the Deer and the Possum” by William “Billy Bowlegs” Harris.

Keywords: [Catawba Nation; Chief Gilbert Blue; South Carolina--Rock Hill; Family histories, Land tenure]

SAMUEL PROCTOR
ORAL HISTORY
P R O G R A M
University of Florida

CAT 160

Interviewee: Henry Leroy Blue

Interviewer: Emma Reid Echols

Date of Interview: April 6, 1983

E: This is Emma Reid Echols, Route 6, Box 260, Rock Hill, South Carolina. April 6, 1983. I'm visiting in the home of Mr. Leroy Blue. He is a son of Chief Sam Blue, and I'm so delighted to be here. I'm on the tract of land called the Freedom Estate. They have their own home, their twelve acres of land, their garden right across the highway. I'm so glad to see a leader of the Catawba Indians who has held on to the heritage and the land that he has. Mr. Blue, how old are you?

B: Seventy-five.

E: What's your complete name?

B: Henry Leroy.

E: Henry Leroy. Where'd you get your name? Having it handed down to you?

B: Well, my sister-in-law named me. My older half-brother's wife named me.

E: How many children did your father have?

B: Twenty-three.

E: Twenty-three. Now, not all of those lived?

B: No, some of 'em died an infant.

E: And there are five of you left now?

B: Yeah.

E: Will you name them for me?

B: Yeah. There's Lula, Vera, Guy, Elsie, and myself, Leroy.

E: You have many memories of your days down on the reservation, I'm sure, and many memories of your father. He was a great man, in my estimation. Will you start at the beginning and just tell me about your early days on the reservation,

anything you want?

B: Well, I was born and raised on the reservation, and we farmed all our life. We tried to make our own living on the farm. Dad cut wood and hauled it and sold it. Daddy had a lathe he borrowed from the White man you see. **Round a profit**—if he made the thing that far, he'd pay him up. If he didn't make it, well, he had to work to cut the hauled wood to pay his debts. He fed us on what he made selling the wood and cutting the wood. I cut ditches with him for a while with the lathe, and we worked with Dr. Nisbet. We'd cut wood, stacked wood for him. That's what Mr. Nisbet always used to heat his home with. I went over there one week about two weeks before Christmas. It was cold. I was over there cutting wood. He come down in the woods—Mr. Nisbet, the doctor—come down in the woods and tell me, "Mr. Blue, what you doing working over here cold as it is?" Well, I told him, "Doctor, I've got to make a living. My wife and children are looking for Christmas. That's the only way I can make a living to get something for Christmas for them." Dr. Nisbet said, "You don't have to do that. Come on with me. I've got change in my pocket." He looked in his pocket, and he had two or three pocketbooks, and he didn't have the right change. He said, "Come on with me to the house. Lay that axe down and come on. I'll let you have the money." I said, "Doc, how am I gonna pay it back?" He said, "Pay it back either way you want. You can pay it back in cutting the wood or you can pay it back in money. Whatever you wanna do." I said, "How much interest are you going to charge?" He said, "No interest at all." Now when I went up there and he asked how much I wanted, I told him fifteen dollars. He wrote me out a check for fifteen dollars. That was we had spent for our Christmas on our children.

E: That was Mr. Guy Oliver? Or Mr. Oliver Nisbet—is that right?

B: No, Jewell Nisbet. Jewell, the old doctor.

E: Oh yeah. Jewell. His father? All right.

B: No, Dr. Oliver had Jewell and his brother.

E: Oh, yes.

B: And Dr. Ronald Lee worked for him. Dr. [inaudible 4:04] was up there about two miles above him. We cut ditches for forty cents a rod and cut cord wood for forty cents a cord. We split it and stacked it. He had us fill up the truck and haul it to the house. That's the way we made our living. We crossed the river in a boat. Cold water, it made no difference how cold it was. We'd get in the boat to row it across the river. We went and cut wood, and it started snowing, we got the barn up there and ripped upriver there. Cold water, and it started snowing so bad we had to quit. There's a first cousin of mine, Irving Gordon. He loved to wrestle. And he always picked on me, wanting to wrestle. He told me and my brother-in-law, Albert Sanders, "I can throw both of you." Albert said, "Reckon he can do it?" I said, "I don't believe he can." We sat on a big stack of hay up there, and we was up on top of that hay. My brother-in-law throw hay down to the bottom of it, and he laughed and that went on. We had jokes and what all until the snow slacked up, then we crossed back over the river and came back home.

E: Did you make your own boats to cross the river?

B: Yes, ma'am.

E: Were they canoes or were they flats?

B: They were just a regular boat like you make now. It narrowed out—wide on the back and narrowed it in the front. It had two big gutters or big wide planks and it

floated, oak **turnwood** on the bottom. That's what we used to cross the river in.

E: Sometimes that river would be up and be difficult to cross, wouldn't it?

B: Oh yes. Sometimes it'd be pretty rough, but we always made it. I've carried pine wood across that river. I'd go down the side of the river. I'd cut a wagon load of it, and we'd float it across river on a raft. Kindling—you know, we'd start a fire with it every morning, and we'd float it across river on this side. They'd get a team of mules and wagons up there and hauled it home. After me and my wife married, I went over there and carried wood across the river. I had a sack on my back. You would get a pick and a saw while I was walking the road to the other side with pine **lighter** on my back.

E: Now some of the Indians lived across the river?

B: Yeah.

E: What were some of the Indians who lived across the river?

B: Mary Jane Watts lived across there, right to the side of the end of the ferry.

E: Now Leola was her daughter?

B: Leola was her stepdaughter. She was an adopted girl, Leola Watts. My brother Nelson—he got to going with her and they fell in love. She didn't want to marry him. So he got mad as hell and told them he was going to kill them after they married. Well, when I told Harris, he was kind of a Chief-like, he pushed it on. Then, finally he kind of added that he wanted him to leave the state. Take a leave. So my brother took off and went to Carlisle, Pennsylvania, and went to school up there.

E: That was Nelson?

B: Yeah.

E: Went to school up in Pennsylvania?

B: Yeah. And he came back—they wrote for him to come back, said everything was over with, so he come back. He had went to school up there before, and he run off from school. He got homesick. Old Man Bob Harris saw him in Washington. So Old Man Bob Harris asked him, said, "Where you goin'?" He said, "I'm goin' home." Bob said, "Wait 'til I get ready, I'll take you home." So old man Harris brought him out of Washington back home.

E: Now how would they travel? By train?

B: Hitchhike.

E: Hitchhike?

B: Yeah. That's the way he traveled. Hitchhiking.

E: Now Bob Harris, I'm trying to place him.

U1: He was a brother to Ben Harris.

B: He was a brother to Ben Harris.

E: Oh, I see. Ben and Bob were brothers.

B: Yeah.

E: Now what would Bob be doing in Washington? On business?

B: Yeah, on business, up at Indian affairs up there.

E: Now when Nelson came home, did he get married then?

B: Yeah.

E: He married the girl?

B: He married the girl.

E: And raised a big family for her?

B: Yeah. When he was alive. his wife's mother, before they get it settled though,

she told him that she was going to kill him—my dad, Chief Blue. She said, "I don't want him in my yard. Set his foot in my yard, if he do, I'll kill him." She'd go out the house with a double-barrel shotgun laid across her lap. The elders—that's our missionaries—our elders, would all go and visit her. She told the missionaries, "Y'all can come on up, but Sam Blue is not coming up. If he comes up here, I'll kill him." So they told him to sit down, now he sit down. He went on up the missionaries' lot and talked to 'em, and he got explained everything to her. She just dropped the gun right there and told him to come on to the house. She'd done sorry she showed off. She put the gun up and, "Come on up in." So he went on in the house and she put her arms around him and hugged him, and told him, "Won't you forgive me?" He told her, "I'll forgive you." From then on, they was friends up until his death—or her death.

E: I have heard the story that the boys who lived across the river came across the river to school on a raft. Little Lenora—her father built her a little boat, a canoe she came across in. Is that right?

B: Dora?

E: Yes.

B: Dora who, now?

U1: That's Albert's mother.

B: Albert's mother?

E: Yeah.

B: Well, I ain't gonna say, 'cause I don't remember her come across the river. In fact, she was a first cousin of mine, too. She lived right above my dad.

E: Now tell me about your school days. Your first school that you remember.

B: The first school I remember I went to—I believe there was a lesson from it I'll tell you about. How about at the end?

E: Go ahead and tell me about that.

B: I was real small, and he picked on the boys. I know he didn't treat the boys right. When they'd get jealous of him, they'd walk out where he was flirting with the girls. He'd take a stick and want to whip the boy, wouldn't whip the girl. So they got mad at him, took him out there, whipped across his buggy, let him throw it up the seats, told him to get off the reservation. They didn't want him for the schoolteacher.

E: You boys wanted an education, and he wasn't teaching you, was he?

B: No, he wasn't teaching us.

E: Did he come back?

B: No, he reported to the Chief. The Chief told him his behavior, they couldn't accept it. So they let him go and then got another teacher. After that, I believe, Ben Harris taught there a while. He taught for a while after Ben Harris. And Rosa—she taught school. I went to school with Rosa.

E: Rose Whitlock.

U1: That was Wheelock.

E: Wheelock.

B: Wheelock, yeah. Then I went to school with Elder Johnson. He was our Mormon missionary. I went to school with him. And I went to school with Elder Blair. He was another Mormon missionary.

E: Would Davis come in there, too?

B: Davis coming in, but I never did go to school with Davis. I never did. Elder Blair

was the last schoolteacher I went to. Davis, he kind of taught school. When I got public work, I didn't go back to school no more. My dad had a hard time making a living. I went to work with public work.

E: Did you use a slate to write on at that time or have write for?

B: Yeah. The slate was kind of slick-like and had to use that for a long time 'til they got the blackboard.

E: And you'd go home for lunch?

B: Yeah. Every day we'd go home for lunch. Now, I lived right down below the schoolhouse. Maybe about two hundred, three hundred yards.

E: Would you help to make the fire in the morning and help to ring the bell?

B: Yeah. Help to ring the bell, build a fire. I'd be about the first one to get up there to build the fire for 'em. While I'm talking about Ben Harris, I went to school with Ben Harris. Me and him fought. We got in a fight up there one day, in recess, they called it. And his sister—Martha Johnson, with Ida Harris, Sally Wade and October Harris—all them was going to school. Martha—no, Ida, I believe, went and told her daddy, said, "Leroy and **Yodelei** are fighting." He come out with a big old stick, big as my finger, dried hickory stick. He was going to whoop us, or he was going to whoop me. He wasn't going to whoop his boy. He was going to whoop me. I broke loose to run. I run across the fields, come across a ditch in the woods, and sat in the woods and hid. He looked some, but he couldn't find me. Martha Johnson, she had hollered, "Run, Leroy, run. Run, Leroy, run." Sally Wade then got to hollering for me to run. So I come home and I hid. I wouldn't go back to school. I went home, Daddy asked me, "Why aren't you at school?" and I told him. He said, "Get that shovel and pick. We got a ditch to cut. I'll let you cut

ditches if you can't go to school." I took that shovel, and with daddy dug ditches. We cleaned it out about a half a mile long. I didn't go back to school a long time later, and then I went back there with Johnson and Elder Blair. That was about the last I went to, and the last I went was when I was in the fifth grade.

E: But you learned the basic things of reading and math. You were good in math, weren't you?

B: Yeah, I liked math, I was pretty good. I liked it better than anything I did in school. So I didn't go back to school until Jim Davis came out. He'd come out of Columbia. He was a principal at the high school down there. They hired him to teach school. But a long time before any of them ever come there, there was Brother Barris. He was a missionary. He brought his whole family from the West. He was the first Mormon missionary ever taught school here.

E: Now was that Harris?

B: No. Barris.

E: Barris. B-A-R-R-I-S?

B: Yeah. He was the first Mormon missionary ever taught school here. I didn't go to him when he was at school, but I knew his boys and his girls. I didn't go to school with him, but I should have went, but I didn't go. His boy damaged his leg and went back home on the mission. His boy come by here on a mission. He got stranded over in old **Cooney** County, what they call Pickens County. Our stake president always warned our missionary about not getting into water over ankle deep. Said when he had to take a bath, he had a strict against rule on getting in over ankle deep. So there was a bunch of them over there in Pickens County that went out on Saturday afternoon swimming. They had a big cable running

across the river there when they come out of the mountain. He stepped off it and a hole went over his head. He went on and he never did come back up. So I worked over there for six months, and I watched the place where got drowned at several times.

E: Then you were about old enough to get married. Tell me about meeting this wife of yours and how you got married to her.

B: Well, I could have been married several times, but I never did want to marry. I worked for my dad, tried to give everything I made. I'd just maybe keep maybe fifty cents, spend some on myself. Just throw away, you know. He had a boy and a girl, that's Elsie and Guy—Elsie and Arnold, the last two children at home. I went to work over there where that fellow drowned, and I was going with a girl over there. A nice religious girl. Me and her was engaged to get married. We come home and met this fellow Walter Harris. He was Garfield's uncle. Let him tell you about it. Me and him went back and forth to see the two girls. So one day he said, "We gonna a double wedding. Are you ready?" I said, "No, I'm not ready." He said, "Go ahead." I said, "I'm not ready to go ahead yet." So he went on. He got ready, he got married, and I never did go back. So I told her I wasn't quite ready. If she wanted to call it off, we'd just call it off. So we called it off quick. Harris went on and married him and he went on out West. Well, I came back home and went to work back in the cotton mill. First thing I met was my wife, she was winding in the cotton mill. There was a girl that was working there, they called Yonda Handcock. I said, "I'd like to go on with her." She says, "**You gonna lay that down this time with her?**" I said, "Yeah, I think so." Said, "She was a nice woman, she went with y'all to church." I said, "Yeah." So I went

and talked to her as she was pulling yarn. All the women pulled yarn then. Her brother pulled yarn for a long time. I was pulling yarn out, too. I took the spools down off the frame as they were winding. I swept and cleaned the floor. I put the rolls of dye up in the bathing room. I went through the outhouse to the bathing room. And I'd come by her sometimes, and I'd talk to her. She was pretty. I didn't like anyone else to talk to her friendly. So one night I went to a party up there. And she said, "I want you to take me home." I said, "Okay. I'll take you home." I took her on home that night and, the next thing I knew, she was getting divorced from her husband. I didn't know nothing about it. I went to work up there at the Rock Hill Printing and Finishing company after that. She told me she was getting a divorce from her husband. Her husband was an old fella. I went to Sunday school one morning over there at church, and she saw me. She said, "Come on and go to church." I said, "No, I don't want to go to church." She said, "Yeah, come on. Go to church." I went up on to church. That all we did, the [inaudible 19:57] and all like that, and we got married.

E: And so now you've been married fifty years?

B: Fifty years.

E: And you have how many children?

B: Seven.

E: And how many grandchildren?

B: Twenty-five.

E: And great-grandchildren?

B: Eleven.

E: Your picture is in a write-up in the *Evening Herald* not long ago.

B: Yeah.

E: That was a very big celebration here. I remember you had happy things to remember. You remember Dr. Speck who came down and lived with your father?

B: Yeah.

E: And collected a great many stories and people. Tell me about that.

B: Well, all I know, he talked Indian language. My dad talked Indian language, him and Sister—

[Break in recording]

E: This is Emma Reed Echols, Route 6, Box 260, Rock Hill, South Carolina. This is April 9, 1983. I'm recording the oral history of the Catawba Indians. I'm taking "The Story of the Deer and the Possum," by William "Billy Bowlegs" Harris. The deer and the opossum were at a persimmon tree, and the deer asked the opossum, "What did you do to get the persimmons down to eat?" And the opossum said, "I go far off and run and come and run and knock against the tree, and the persimmons fall. That way, I get persimmons." He said to the deer, "You are bigger than I am, and you would be the one to go off and come running and bump against the tree. More persimmons will fall, because it will make a bigger jar." So the deer believed it, and went off and came a running as hard as he could come, knocked against the tree, and killed himself by it. Then, the opossum wanted to know, how he could cut up the deer? What could he get to cut up the deer? While he was around there, singing, he pulled up every kind of blade—grass blade—and ran his finger along the edge, to see whether the blade would cut or not. And, by reason of this, he cut one of his fingers off. This is the reason the opossum's hand has one of its fingers cut off. The wolf came there

while he was singing, and asked the opossum, "What are you singing about?" The opossum said, "I was just singing for pleasure." The wolf said, "No, you're not, and if you don't tell me what it is, I will jump on you and bite you and kill you." And the opossum was scared then, and told the wolf what he had done, and then went on to where the deer was. The wolf grabbed hold of the deer and tore it up with his mouth and his feet. After he tore it up, he took the entrails and threw them in the opossum's face. That was all the opossum's share. The opossum went off with it, crying and looking and gathering brush to start a fire, as he would broil what he had been given. But he was very sorry about it and cried. A drove of partridges heard him and went there where the opossum was and asked him, "What's the matter?" He told them the tale of it. The partridges told the opossum to go back to where the deer lay and the wolf was, and he did. The partridges told him, they'd go far of and come flying and make a terrible roar, right at the time for him to tell the wolf something: "A great excitement is coming!" and "Run!" And so he did. And the wolf believed it and ran to save himself. The partridges took the deer meat, and the opossum made a scaffold and put the meat up there for himself. Then, the opossum climbed up on where the deer meat was. Afterwards, the wolf was hunting for the meat, and went where the deer meat on the scaffold was over the branch. He saw the shadow of the meat in the bottom of the branch. He jumped onto the branch to get the meat and went down to the bottom of the branch and gathered up a mouthful of leaves. He thought it was the meat. And every time he went into the water and every time he came back, he got nothing but a mouthful of leaves. The opossum saw the wolf doing this, commenced to laughing and dripped some spittle. The wolf saw the

opossum then and knew he couldn't climb on the scaffold. He told the opossum to drop a little bone down to where he was. He made out that he would choke on the bone so the opossum would laugh. The opossum threw the bone down there, and the wolf did try to swallow the bone, got choked, and died. They were going to hang the opossum for killing the wolf, and the opossum told them to carry him through the woods, through a rough thicket place to make him suffer as much as they could for his deeds before finishing him off to his death. So they did. The partridge friends to the opossum followed along the way they went. The partridges bent some saplings of bushes for the opossum to catch the top of the bush with his tail to save himself from being hung. And the possum did catch onto some saplings on the route. When they came to the place where they were going to hang him, a large crowd was there to see the hanging. And this crowd had carried the fire there, just hooped and hollered. When they laid the pole down on which they carried the opossum, the opossum was not there. So they all got disappointed about hanging the opossum.

[Break in recording]

- B: Our golf leader, Roy Hill, big as he is. I walked to right beside his bed, they'd call. [inaudible 26:20] stayed laid there all night, drunk talking. Next morning, he got up, he laid down on the floor right beside my bed. He got up next morning, getting a fever. "Well, I'm feeling a lot better [inaudible 26:34] Said, "I'm going home now, if you need me. Over there, you come and call her. I'll be here." So he went on home, I come back to [inaudible 26:50]
- E: He came there on a horse and buggy to Catawba?
- B: Horse and buggy. Old grey horse and a buggy.

E: The old grey horse was Ned, wasn't it?

B: Yeah.

E: His son told me that he used to hitch up the horse, and he'd pay him ten cents for hitching up the horse in the dead of night to go visit him.

B: Yeah, he would, he'd pay him to hitch the horse up. He always told him, he said, "Roy, you get well, then you and me going to Salt Lake City." That was his son. That was his oldest son. Said, "We're going to Salt Lake City. I want to see that place before I die."

E: Did he get to go?

B: No, he never did get to go.

E: What about you? Did you get to go?

B: Yeah, I went.

E: I remember when your father and mother went. And you went later?

B: I went in [19]61, me and my wife. In [19]61, out in Salt Lake City. That's where we was married for life or an eternity.

E: Do you remember the medicines your father used to make and sell?

B: Yeah.

E: Did you ever help him?

B: Well, he always sell that fireweed.

U1: Bear root.

B: Bear root, and some kind of buttercup weed, he called it. The buttercup come on, he'd make it into salve and use it. I've seen them make that a many of days, make that fireweed root, bear root. I never did try to learn it. My brother-in-law, he kind of caught onto it, he knows a little bit about it. Albert Sanders.

E: They know where to find that in the woods, don't they?

B: Yeah.

E: Your father never learned to read or write, but he had marvelous memory, didn't he?

B: Well, I'll tell you the reason my daddy never did learned to read and write, when he was first at church—the Mormon church—was first organized down there. President Charles A. Callis was down there—that was the man who **said that thing** when, you know, when his boy get killed. He'd come down with Brother Blue. He got highly recommended, through the Lord, through the Catawba priesthood, through the [inaudible 29:17] He said, "President Callis, I'm an unlearned man, who can't read or write. How in the world can I run the right thing? I've achieved a Tribe here and try to run it. How can I run that?" He said "Brother Blue, if you accept our promise, the Lord will reveal all His grace." He said, "You will learn the scripture. You'll learn learned the price you make." So he said, "What the Lord wants me to do, I'll accept it. I'll do the best I can." So that's all the Lord required, do the best you can. So he accepted, and he was vice president for about forty or fifty years, and Chief of the Tribe about forty years, and he lived the religion up 'til his death. Then, he wanted to go to Salt Lake. He wanted to see a temple work and didn't know how he was going. The president told him to "Brother Blue, **I'll provide for you to go away Friday,**" said "Here you go." Sunday morning and the very next—

[Break in Recording]

E: You were telling me that your father was sent to Salt Lake City by our friends, the Mormon elders, the Mormon missionaries. Tell me how your father entertained

them—in his home, I believe?

B: He took them and fed 'em, give them a bed, washed all their laundry—they did their laundry. They did their missionary work in the daytime, and preached the Gospel, people wouldn't accept it—

E: He didn't have very many beds to give 'em, how did he do?

B: We had four or five on the floor. Some of 'em slept in a cot. We'd sleep in the cot. My mama slept in the hay.

E: Where'd your father sleep?

B: He went to the woods and slept there down on a cot, on fallen leaves and slept in the summertime. They'd take care of the missionaries, come back down, cook breakfast for 'em. You get come back, cook breakfast for 'em. They was on their way out to work at the church, preaching the gospel.

E: No wonder they appreciated him.

B: Yes, ma'am. My dad always loved the gospel, and he believed in his faith. We used to work for Mr. Will Kowens up here, and we cut wood for Mr. Kowens. Me and him went in the woods went one morning at 5:00. By 10:00, we'd even have ten cords of wood laying on the ground. Usually went right past dinner. After dinner, about 1:00, then he racked his wood up. His son's newest school clerk, let me him go at 3:00 where the school at. Right on the hill out there to Mr. Kowens, and we went up there and he told my daddy, said, "Sam, I'll tell you what I'll do. I'll give you a thousand dollars if you deny that Mormon church tonight, forsake the Mormon church." "Mr. Kowens, you can take me out here in your yard and lay my head across the chopping block like a chicken, take an axe and cut my head off, separate it from my body, before I deny my faith. I know the

church is true, and I won't deny it." He said, "That kind of faith that you got that you keep. I'll tell you what. I'll give you sixteen hundred dollars." Said, "No, you could give a million, I wouldn't accept it. I know God lives. I know all shall reveal His truth." He's morning come back and told you about it, would you believe it? Said, "I have a right to believe. I teach the gospel. I know it's true. I got a right to stick to it." Cursed it to him, said, "That kind of faith you got, you stick with it." My Dad stuck with it. Mr. Kowens passed away, and Dad lived many a years after he was gone. Mr. Kowens died and then my brother, then he got killed. Real strong boy. I remember when he got killed, me and my mother—I helped her cross big ol' pine trees blowed down I crawled out and helped her. My brother went on a creek. Big ol' pines and cedar trees. He was laying under that tree, and they give him a pocket knife to go up in the tree and run the squirrels out. And he told them, "Y'all won't shoot, will you?" And they said, "No. We won't shoot. We'll wait 'til you come down." So, he got up there and about three or four squirrels run up out of the nest. The man stood on one side of the tree, the boy stood on the other, and everybody stood in the front. The huge boy said, "Go, daddy, go. Shoot." He said, "Lord have mercy. You promised not to shoot. Don't shoot." All three guns went off. They shot his right lung out, shot part of his liver out, shot both his eyes out. Get the ground, cut the dogs off to lick blood off his face, took the knife out of his pocket, and left. Idle Sanders was there. He was with the trap. He come home, told his daddy-in-law—his brother-in-law—what happened. His mother said, "Lord have mercy, I didn't expect my son to become a murderer." The old man said, "Shut up, or I'll smack the hell out of you." That's the way he spoke to her. Idle Sanders told me that years before he died, didn't tell nobody

nothing else, nothing. He said, "I've been wanting to tell you this. A lot of people asked me this, but I wouldn't tell them." Early Brown, Walter Harris, Wesley Harris—that's the three guys that shot my brother. Walter Harris, he went out West, he met that girl out there that he went out with. He had a pretty rough life before he died. His daddy had a terrible life before he died. My daddy had to wait on him, on his dying bed. Before that my brother got killed, something told my dad, says, "If you don't take the gun and killed that fella that killed your son, then you're a coward." He went down in the woods and prayed. A little old tree grewed there. He knelt down in the hollow of that tree and had a prayer and then started back to the house. Something told him, "Samuel, you're a coward if you don't do it." He goes back to the woods and prayed again. He got it back to the house back the third time. **"Samuel, you're a coward if you don't kill the man who killed your son."** He went back to the woods. He prayed seven times. He said, "Lord, I need you now. Help me Lord. You help me take vengeance out of my mind. Because I want to meet this fella, I want to meet him in the next world." [inaudible 37:43] left the house and put his arm around him, shook hands with him, told him that he was sorry the thing happened like it did. They were friends on up until that, until he die.

E: Do you think it was an accident?

B: No.

E: It was deliberate?

B: He deliberate done it. I'll tell you the reason why. On a Sunday night, my brother—my brother-in-law—Forest Blankenship was sitting out in front of the church. Brother Harris—Walter—and his daddy come up with his boy. He told his

boy, he said, "Can't you throw him?" He said, "Yeah, I can throw him." My brother said, "No, I don't believe he's man enough." Then old man Harris said, "Show him, son, you can do it." He grabbed my brother and my brother threw him, held on the ground. Old man Harris said, "Come on, son. We'll get even with him one of these days. Come on and go home." And that's why I think he did it on purpose.

E: You're good because you can forget the bad things and remember the good ones.

B: Oh, yeah.

E: You were telling me a little bit ago about lawyers that have been good to you—the mayor and the lawyers of Rock Hill?

B: Yeah, Mr. Carpenter was a good friend of mine. **John True Ryder** was a good friend of my daddy's, a good friend of me. Mr. **Henry G. Ron** and my daddy was good friends.

E: Mr. Carpenter helped you in a lawsuit and didn't charge you a penny?

B: Didn't charge me a dime.

E: It's wonderful you've got that many good friends. I want to ask you about something I have heard, that years ago Mrs. Roosevelt came to Winthrop College. And in the school down there, they had made a necklace for her. And that your daddy went to Winthrop College and presented her with that necklace. Have you ever heard that story or even seen the pictures?

B: No, I never did see it, but I heard talk of it. I never did see it.

E: Do you know when it—

B: No, I don't know exactly what year it was, or why she came there. But I

remember she came there, but I was working. I was out of town. I was working in Woodville, Georgia, then. So that was something I don't remember off the bat.

E: I'm proud of some of the Indians that I know that have gone right ahead in business and made good. Now your son is one of them.

B: Yes, ma'am.

E: Name some of the Indians that have gone out in the world and made good the business world.

B: Well, you can take myself, like I held my property. [inaudible 40:16] My property, I divided it between two girls and two boys. All the rest of the girls, when they was married, they got their share. And their husbands, I told 'em, told their wives, I told them they could sell it. I kept mine then. My other two girls, my baby girl and my next oldest girl, they knew I had it. [inaudible 40:51] I got that wried off, got the will made off. Got my will. [inaudible 41:05] But he kept my will. Got a copy of it. I got a copy of it now. I got it myself. But he's got the rest of it. He said, "Anything you want to change in your will at any time, you come to my office. Anything you want to put in it, you want to change in it, you come right in."
[inaudible 41:28]

E: **Carson, now**—he's with the—Little **Rocky has his own business here**. The settlement work in Charlotte has made good, there are nurses and there are technicians—

B: Well I'll tell you, C. Hanson all. He went into business with C. Hanson. C. Hanson always wanted be together by the tank. Fact of is he couldn't do it. [inaudible 42:10] He lost big. The odds are you'll never make it. But my boy pulled out the eleven, put in the contract as a carpenter. Building houses, building swimming

pools, he saw just as bad as he was—he saw what he was getting into. But he wanted some heavy equipment. He wanted me to support my boy in heavy equipment. I said, “You make your mind up—you prove to me that you’re gonna make good of it, I’ll get you the machines of new equipment.” He said, “I can get it.” But he couldn’t do it. He couldn’t hold up. One day, he come up to Charlotte buy some equipment. Came back, told my boy, said, “Well, here’s our equipment we bought.” He said, “We? I got nothing to do with it. That’s your equipment. My name ain’t on it.” So he fooled around, and he missed a payment. The government took it away from him. He lost his whole **investment**. He had to leave the state. His lawyers told me that he had to get out the state. My boy pulled out. Round this little textile rentals, next to Holiday Inn. He was gonna sue my boy for sixteen thousand dollars. I’ll tell you, what a swindle, what a fool, I tell you. He’s just started, now he’s finished. After he left, he was gonna sue my boy. I said, “You can’t sue him.” I said, “He didn’t write his name on that thing.” I said, “What’ll you take to settle my boy’s part out of it, to get his name off of that?” Check he gave, so I gave him about six hundred dollars, I believe. I went to the lawyers and told the lawyers, I said, “You talk to him, I’ll give him five hundred to pay it off. To get his name off of that settlement.” So he told him, and he accepted. So my boy wanted to go. [inaudible 44:48] He said, “Daddy, I need a little money.” I said, “How much you need, son? He said, “I need fifteen hundred dollars.” I said, “I’ll pay you, boy. I’m not worried about it.” I wrote him a check for fifteen hundred dollars. Got my money back, always try to help my boy—I loaned him a thousand dollars, he had about two dollars all together. I’ve known I’ve helped him. I like to do for him all that I am able to do. [inaudible 45:25] They’re

getting old. They're saving money, they're trying to live out the rest of their days. We have to pay 'em back. We're gonna pay him interest. So they had a whole bunch of washing machines they brought down there. I went down there. Now, he's gonna pay you interest. They paid it. I done got my money back. All trying to help my boy. I loaned him a thousand dollars just not too long ago. He got up the interest. All this time, if he don't pay us back, I know I've helped. I like to do for him like he ain't able to do. I wouldn't turn him away, wouldn't turn him down.

E: It's amazing to me that you earned your money and saved your money, cutting wood for fifty cents a cord, fifty cents a load. But you've done it all these years. What do you think the relationship of the Whites and the Indians? Don't you think it has improved a great deal?

B: Oh yeah, it sure has. It's improved a hundred times, from back when I was coming up.

E: And you've got so many friends among the White people?

B: Yeah, I sure have. I've got a lot of friends among the White people. I think the highest of Sheriff, I think the world of him. The Sheriff of York County—I knew him, I knew his daddy.

E: Who was that?

B: The Sheriff of York County.

E: Oh, yes.

B: Mr. Pope was a real fine man. I knew his whole family, his daddy was good family, he come from a good family. **We all were friends growing up.**

E: And don't you think the Indians are taking a great deal more pride in their race and their Tribe now than they used?

B: Yeah, they are. They're taking more pride. Usually, they didn't take too much pride, they'd just let it go. Now they've seen what they've done, how they lost what they've got down there. They really think [inaudible 47:40] took a piece of land from them, said, "I'll give you two hundred dollars for a piece of land." Well, they didn't have no money. I'll tell you, they lost of big time. My girl [inaudible 47:50] had a piece out there she wanted. My boy wanted—he offered two hundred dollars for it, or five hundred dollars. Right, said, "I'll give you five hundred dollars for it." And she said she'd take it. She sold it for two hundred dollars less than what he offered her for it. Same thing with Georgia Harris over here right across the river in **Woodrow County** [inaudible 48:15] She had fourteen acres of land over there [inaudible 48:30] offered her fifty-five hundred dollars for it, I went a little over to forty-five hundred, and he wouldn't accept it [inaudible 48:30] He wouldn't let him have it. He wouldn't sell it to him. He said, "No, I want fifty-five." [inaudible 48:48] William Locke. He told him, "What will you take?" [inaudible 49:08] Three thousand dollars and paid him seventeen hundred dollars [inaudible 49:23] eight thousand.

E: It's just a crime—a pity to see them lose the land like that.

B: Yes, ma'am. [inaudible 49:30] Mr. Locke sold it to Mr. Redford. Eight thousand dollars. Mr. Redford turned around and sold it to a **scammer** for a hundred and eighteen thousand [inaudible 49:49] Give her twenty-five hundred dollars, about five hundred dollars, paid her that, and he sold the land to the city for eighteen thousand dollars.

E: Is the ignorance on the part of the Indians who sell their land like that? Are they just duped into it or what?

B: Well, they're duped into it.

E: They just don't realize the value of the land?

B: They don't realize the value, that's right.

E: That's just—it makes me heartsick.

B: It does. It makes me feel real bad.

E: Well, on the reservation, as you've got a brother living down there, and some relatives, they're putting more trails down there than anything else now. They're not building a great deal down there.

B: Well, there's not any way to get to the materials to build a home with. A lot of them are still high. They come out a lot cheaper, a trailer can get by longer.

E: Which is your church? On the reservation?

B: On the reservation.

E: And they've done so much to improve the church and the school down there.

B: Yes, ma'am.

E: A great deal?

B: [inaudible 51:05]

E: You've done mighty well, and it's just a privilege to get to know ones like you. I think I've made tapes of all your family, except your brother Guy.

B: Yeah, well, he likes talking. If he gets started, he can talk the whole evening.

E: What is one thing you want to summarize—you've seen my Indian pictures, and you talk Indian—what would you give as a one-word summary about the relations between Indians and the Whites?

B: You mean, the relationship in the past or—

E: The relationship now.

- B: Oh, they have a really good relationship now. Well, now, when the land proposition was brought up, that fellow Guy Johnson down there [inaudible 52:10] I've seen it around here. He wanted to raise all this turmoil [inaudible 52:22] If the Chief and state worked this thing out, it would have been over with. They wouldn't let nobody see them hurt, but the day he put it out—they's gonna take their homes, they's gonna take their land, but you know they ain't gonna do nothing like that. [inaudible 52:43] They both have land, That's your home. Nobody else got the respect to use it. [inaudible 52:52] Some of them, got all the land from the Indians. [inaudible 53:00] They moved into North Carolina. They thought the North Carolina governor would take care of them. North Carolina governor wouldn't do it. [inaudible 53:20] Put them right on where they are today. They got no deed. [inaudible 53:40] State took it from them. Couldn't do it. So he died. He died. He didn't have no deed, nothing. He left [inaudible 53:50] like it is.
- E: But you do see a brighter day for you, don't you?
- B: Oh, yeah.
- E: A much brighter day.
- B: A whole lot brighter day is coming.
- E: That's what we all hope for.
- B: Yeah, I say we were treated—allowed to go to school with the Whites. Only on the reservation. Then, we improved a whole lot, intermarried with the Whites. We all love the Whites, just like on people respecting our own people. Just like old friends.
- E: Well, I'm glad that I can count myself as one of your friends, too.
- B: That's right.

[End of interview]

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